

13

credit display 110. After depositing the appropriate amount of money, a player can begin the game by pulling pull arm 118 or pushing play button 120. Play button 120 can be any play activator used by the player which starts any game or sequence of events in the gaming device.

As shown in FIG. 8A, gaming device 100 also includes a bet button 124. The player places a bet by pushing the bet one button 124. The player can increase the bet by one credit each time the player pushes the bet one button 124. When the player pushes the bet one button 124, the number of credits shown in the credit display 110 decreases by one, and the number of credits shown in the bet display 112 increases by one. Although not shown, the gaming device can also include bet max, select line, bet per line and other conventional wager indicators.

A player may cash out between games and thereby receive a number of coins corresponding to the number of remaining credits by pushing a cash out button 126. When the player cashes out, the player receives the coins in a coin payout tray 128. The gaming device 100 may employ other payout mechanisms such as credit slips redeemable by a cashier or electronically recordable cards which keep track of the player's credits. Furthermore, gaming device 100 preferably includes speakers 130 for making sounds or playing music.

As illustrated in FIG. 8B, the general electronic configuration of gaming device 100 preferably includes: a processor 132; a data storage device or memory device 134 for storing computer programs, code or other data; a display device; a sound card 136; a plurality of speakers 130; and one or more input devices 138. The processor 132 is preferably a microprocessor or microcontroller-based platform which is capable of causing the display device 14 of the present invention to display images such as symbols, cards, images of people, characters, places, and objects which function in the gaming device. Data storage or memory device 134 can include any suitable software and/or hardware, including, without limitation, any tape or any disk, such as a CD-ROM, floppy disk, hard disk or any other optical or magnetic disk. The data storage or memory device 134 can include random access memory (RAM) 140 for storing event data or other data generated or used during a particular game. The data storage or memory device 134 can also include read only memory (ROM) 142 for storing program code which controls the gaming device 100 so that it plays a particular game in accordance with applicable game rules and pay tables.

As illustrated further in FIG. 8B, the player preferably uses the input devices 138, such as pull arm 118, play button 120, the bet one button 112 and the cash out button 126 to input signals into gaming device 100. As described above, in certain embodiments one or more of these functions could also be employed on a touch screen. In such embodiments, gaming device 100 includes a touch screen controller 16 which is connected to a video controller 146 and processor 132. A player can make decisions and input signals into the gaming device 100 by touching the appropriate locations on the touch screen display. As further illustrated in FIG. 8B, the processor 132 is connected to currency acceptor such as the coin slot 114 or bill acceptor 116. The processor 132 can be programmed to require a player to deposit a certain amount of money in order to start the game.

It should be appreciated that although a processor 132 and memory device 134 are preferable implementations of the present invention, the present invention can also be implemented using one or more application-specific integrated circuits (ASIC's) or other hard-wired devices, or using mechanical devices (collectively or alternatively referred to herein as a "processor"). Furthermore, although the processor 132 and

14

memory device 134 preferably reside on each gaming device 100 unit, it is possible to provide some or all of their functions at a central location such as a network server for communication to a playing station such as over a local area network (LAN), wide area network (WAN), Internet connection, microwave link, and the like. The processor 132 and memory device 134 are at times generally referred to herein as the "computer" or "controller."

With reference to FIGS. 8A and 8B, to operate the gaming device 100 in one embodiment the player must insert the appropriate amount of money or tokens at coin slot 114 or bill acceptor 116 and then pull the pull arm 118 or push the play button 120. The video reels 107 will then begin to spin. Eventually, the individual reels 107 will come to a stop. As long as the player has credits remaining, the player can spin the reels 107 again. Depending upon where the reels 107 stop, the player may or may not win additional credits.

In addition to winning credits in this manner, the gaming device 100 may also give players the opportunity to win credits in a bonus round. This type of gaming device 100 will include a program which will automatically begin a bonus round game when the player has achieved a qualifying condition in the game. This qualifying condition can be a particular arrangement of one or more indicia on a display device. As illustrated in the five reel slot game shown in FIG. 8A, the qualifying condition could be the number seven appearing on three adjacent reels 107 along a payline 148. It should be appreciated that the present invention can include one or more paylines, such as payline 148, wherein the paylines can be horizontal, diagonal or any combination thereof.

The gaming device of the present invention can be used to play any type of primary game, bonus round game or other game. In one embodiment, the gaming device includes a game which enables a player to have inputs and interaction which are associated with a depth or z-dimension extending into and through the face of the frontmost display surface. This type of three-dimensional game play can be suitable for wagering games which, by their original design, are three-dimensional, such as blackjack, poker, roulette, and other casino games including, but not limited to, skill and perceived-skill games. Other wagering games can enable a player to cause different events to occur based upon how hard the player pushes on the touch screen. For example, a player could cause reels or objects to move faster by pressing harder on the exterior touch screen. In these types of games, the gaming device can enable the player to interact in the three dimensions by varying the amount of pressure the player applies to the frontmost display screen (which operates as a three-dimensional sensing touch screen, as described earlier).

In another embodiment, the gaming device enables a player to play two or more games on two or more display screens at the same time or at different times. For example, a player can play two related games on two of the display screens simultaneously. In another example, once a player deposits currency to initiate the gaming device, the gaming device may enable the player to choose from one or more games to play on different display screens. In yet another example, the gaming device can include a multi-level bonus scheme which enables a player to advance to different bonus rounds which are displayed and played on different display screens.

As indicated above, the gaming device of the present invention can also enable players to view information and graphics generated on one display screen playing a game which is generated on another display screen. Such information and graphics can include game paytables, game-related information, entertaining graphics, background, history or game